

Joint Munitions Command graduates first Lean Six Sigma Black Belt Class

By Darryl Howlett, JMC Public Affairs

Sixteen Joint Munitions Command employees proudly received their Lean Six Sigma black belt training certificates from Bob Crawford, deputy to the commander, during a ceremony Aug. 4.



Bob Crawford, deputy to the commander, addresses the class before the ceremony.

“You now have the responsibility to impart your knowledge, your information, your skill set into challenging others,” he said. “You must continue to adhere to a standard of excellence to change JMC. You are the ones who will start to help our people, to be an influencing agent. You will be our foundation.

“(Brig.) Gen. Rogers is stuck at the airport. He tried his darneest to get back here,” Crawford said concerning JMC’s commanding general. “He’s so passionate about Lean Six Sigma, and he’s so proud of each and every one of you for your commitment to excellence.”

To earn black belt certification, students attend five weeks of training, pass a comprehensive exam and complete two projects, according to Walt Songaila, JMC’s LSS deployment director. Projects work at making the command’s processes effective and more efficient. Projects use a number of LSS tools and techniques. The projects run approximately six months in duration and result in impressive process improvements and often result in cost savings.

Songaila said one such project involves increasing the effectiveness and accuracy of shipping and transportation documentation from JMC’s installation sites to Surface Deployment and Distribution Command and naval terminals/ports for OCONUS ammunition movements.

Ann Dickens, one of two black belt instructors during the five-week course, applauded the group on its efforts.

“I had a great time. I look forward to seeing your successful projects in the future,” she said.

In addition to those JMC employees located at Rock Island, Ill., other participants in the black belt program traveled from Crane Army Ammunition Activity, Ind., Letterkenny Munitions Center, Pa., Tooele Army Depot, Utah, Anniston Munitions Center, Ala., and Blue Grass Army Depot, Ky



Students pose for a class picture with (back, left) Bob Crawford, JMC deputy to the commander, and Walt Songaila, (far right).

Crawford told the students that achieving a black belt is all part of a larger journey to improve the command.

“I believe we’re doing all the right steps to go to the next level. Thank you so much for all your hard work. Be proud of being distinguished as a black belt.”

Songaila said the new black belts will continue to move the command in the right direction.

“It’s a significant step forward for JMC. It’s a huge milestone for us in our self-sustainment path,” he said. “I look forward to and encourage some of (the black belts) to go on to be master black belts. They will have my full support.”

Black belt student Rudy Toth said the course gave students the opportunity to think “outside the box.”

“I enjoyed the class very much. I liked the synergy from the different people in class,” he said.

The next black belt class is scheduled to begin in early 2007.